

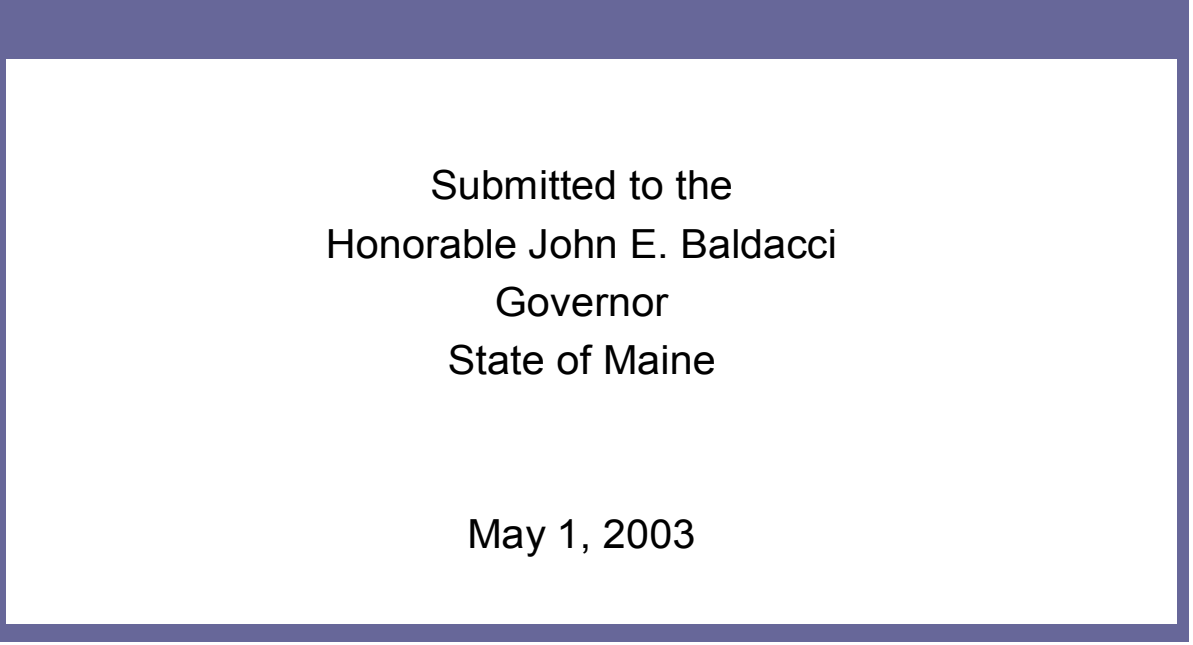
# **Interim Report**



## **Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in the Use of K-12 Education Resources**

Submitted to the  
Honorable John E. Baldacci  
Governor  
State of Maine

May 1, 2003



## **Interim Report**

### **Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in the Use of K-12 Education Resources**

#### Introduction

On February 5, 2003, the Honorable John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, signed an executive order establishing the ***Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in the Use of K-12 Education Resources***.

The seven-member task force was charged with the following duties:

- a. Examine all components of the K-12 education system in Maine to identify more efficient and equitable uses of resources;
- b. Examine state, regional, and local relationships with regard to school funding to determine practices that promote or detract from efficient and equitable use of resources;
- c. Consult with other study groups and stakeholders in carrying out its duties;
- d. Identify strategies used in other states to increase efficiencies;
- e. Identify incentives for improving efficiencies; and
- f. Act as a working group to recommend to the Governor actions to produce greater elementary and secondary excellence, efficiency and equity.

Furthermore, the task force was directed to report to the Governor by May 1, 2003, on:

- a. The number and content of areas deserving of further examination by the Task Force pursuant to its duty to recommend actions to produce greater elementary and secondary education, excellence, efficiency and equity;
- b. The consultations it has had with other study groups and stakeholders; and;
- c. Its recommendations for its further work plan;

and to submit a final report to the Governor by January 20, 2004. The final report must include recommendations for improving efficiency and equity in the use of K-12 education resources in Maine. A copy of the complete executive order appears in Appendix A, and a listing of the task force membership appears in Appendix B.

The Task Force has held three meetings to date: March 19, April 8, and April 16, 2003. As part of its work, the Task Force has analyzed information on Maine school districts, and reviewed several previously developed reports on Maine's education system, school governance, regionalization, and consolidation. A listing of this information and these reports appears in Appendix C. In addition, the Task Force has met with several consultants and representatives of stakeholder groups. A listing of these individuals and organizations appears in Appendix D.

Based on this review, analysis, and consultation, the Task Force has reached several preliminary conclusions and decisions which will be used to guide the future work of the task force.

#### Preliminary Conclusions and Decisions

The Task Force has reached the following conclusions and decisions:

1. The goal of the Task Force work is to identify ways of maximizing cost savings so more K-12 revenues and resources may be directed toward instruction.
2. The Task Force will examine all components of the K-12 education system they deem appropriate for identifying potential efficiencies.
3. The Task Force will focus its work on identifying cost-savings, efficiencies, and, where appropriate, incentives for promoting cost-savings and efficiencies. The Task Force will not address issues related to the amount and distribution of state subsidies and taxpayer equity.
4. Wherever appropriate and possible, the Task Force will identify and disseminate information on Best Practices with regard to efficiencies and cost-savings.

5. The Task Force members, in consultation with the co-chair of the Legislatively established School Administrative Unit Study Group, agreed that the Unit Study Group would focus its work, as it currently is doing, primarily on identifying efficient and effective ways of organizing school administrative units. The Study Group and Task Force will share information, sources, and findings as appropriate.
6. The Task Force has established the following list of assumptions to guide its work:
  - a. There are too many school districts in the state of Maine.
  - b. Not all students throughout the state are getting the same quality of education.
  - c. Larger organizational structures are neither inherently good nor inherently bad.
  - d. Regionalization of services may assist in providing more efficient and equitable education opportunities.
  - e. Significant statewide projected enrollment decline will require new approaches to the delivery of equitable education opportunities.
  - f. Some education systems in Maine are more efficient than others in delivering quality, equitable education programs and services.
  - g. Increasing efficiencies and cost savings will require both state and local communities to explore and adopt alternative methods of delivering services.
  - h. Cost savings should be shared by the state and local communities, whenever appropriate.
7. The Task Force decided to focus on the following topics and areas during the initial phase of their work:
  - a. Administrative costs
  - b. Regionalization of services
  - c. Consolidation of districts and services
  - d. Program cost areas of transportation, special education, and vocational education; and the program costs circuit breaker program.
  - e. School construction

- f. Maine Department of Education organization and services
- g. Federal funding programs

Other areas will be analyzed as they are identified.

8. The Task Force has concluded:

Regionalization of services and programs, including where appropriate consolidation of districts, services, and programs, should be a key strategy for improving efficiencies and equity in Maine's K-12 education system. Furthermore, regionalization strategies need to be customized to fit the unique needs of different regions. However, the Task Force also recognized that regionalization alone is a necessary, but not sufficient strategy for producing the desired levels of efficiencies and equity. Other strategies will be developed as the work of the Task Force continues.

### Future Work Plan

The Task Force has scheduled the following meeting dates:

May 7	July 30
May 28	August 20
June 18	September 10
July 9	Oct-January-TBA

Other meetings will be added as needed. The Task Force meetings will continue to focus on:

1. consultations with experts and stakeholder groups;
2. the analysis of information and reports prepared at the request of the Task Force; and,
3. the review of strategies and programs used in other states to increase efficiencies and equity, and promote regionalization and consolidation where appropriate.

The Task Force will submit to the Governor by January 20, 2004 a final report, which will include a series of recommendations for improving efficiency and equity in the use of Maine's K-12 education resources.

## **Appendix A**

# *Executive Order*

OFFICE OF  
THE GOVERNOR

No. 08 FY02/03  
February 5, 2003

## **AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE ON INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY IN THE USE OF K-12 EDUCATION RESOURCES**

**WHEREAS**, spending on elementary and secondary education is a large part of the budgets of Maine state government and municipalities; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine's investment in education has resulted in learning experiences our children deserve as measured by high test scores and exemplary high school graduation rates; and

**WHEREAS**, improved efficiencies in the delivery of K-12 education may result in great equity in the distribution and use of limited education resources and increased excellence in our schools; and

**WHEREAS**, to keep our commitment to education excellence, state, regional and local education leaders must join together to develop strategies for maximizing cost savings to be directed toward instruction;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in the Use of K-12 Education Resources (Task Force) as follows:

### **1. Duties**

The Task Force shall:

- g. Examine all components of the K-12 education system in Maine to identify more efficient and equitable uses of resources;
- h. Examine state, regional, and local relationships with regard to school funding to determine practices that promote or detract from efficient and equitable use of resources;
- i. Consult with other study groups and stakeholders in carrying out its duties;
- j. Identify strategies used in other states to increase efficiencies;
- k. Identify incentives for improving efficiencies; and
- l. Act as a working group to recommend to the Governor actions to produce greater elementary and secondary excellence, efficiency and equity.



## **2. Procedures**

The Task Force shall be led by a chair and vice-chair, and be composed of five (5) other members, appointed by the Governor. The Task Force shall meet at times and places called by the chair and with assistance from the Governor's Office and state agencies as necessary and appropriate to carry out its activities. The members of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

## **3. Other Resources and Support**

The Task Force may accept staffing and other administrative support from outside sources as it deems appropriate to its duties.

## **4. Web Site Link**

The Task Force shall provide a link on the Governor's Office web site to collect suggestions on potential K-12 education resources efficiencies.

## **5. Interim Report**

The Task Force shall report to the Governor by May 1, 2003, on:

- d. The number and content of areas deserving of further examination by the Task Force pursuant to its duty to recommend actions to produce greater elementary and secondary education, excellence, efficiency and equity;
- e. The consultations it has had with other study groups and stakeholders; and
- f. Its recommendations for its further work plan.

## **6. Final Report**

The Task Force shall submit a final report to the Governor by January 20, 2004. The final report must include recommendations for improving efficiency and equity in the use of K-12 education resources in Maine.

## **7. Effective Date**

The effective date of this Executive Order is February 5, 2003.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

## **Appendix B**

## **Members**

### **Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in K-12 Education**

James Doughty (chair), Husson College, Department of Education

David Silvernail (vice-chair), University of Southern Maine, Center for Education Policy, Applied Research and Evaluation

Robert Cobb, University of Maine, College of Education and Human Development

Bonnie Titcomb Lewis, Mitchell Scholarship Research Institute

Joyce McPhetres, State Board of Education; School Administrative Unit Organization Study Group; MBNA

James Rier, Maine State Department of Education

John Rosser, The Spurwink Institute

## **Appendix C**

### **List of Information and Reports Reviewed**

1. Maine Report Card: 2001-02 State Totals and Percentages
2. Maine Report Card: 2001-02 State Totals and Percentages by Salary and Non-Salary Categories
3. Financial Indicators for 2001-02 Preliminary – Percentages
4. Financial Indicators for 2001-02 Preliminary – Expenditure Amounts
5. SAUs Percent of Total FY2002 Budget Funded by State Subsidy
6. 2000-01 Per Pupil Expenditures by Unit Type and Size
7. Units with Higher and Lower Than Predicted Transportation Costs
8. List of SAUs in Conversations Regarding Consolidation
9. List of Maine Department of Education Forms Requested of SAUs
10. List of Vocational Regional Centers
11. Student Enrollment Projections by Town to 2015
12. Listing of Common Types of School Units and Characteristics
13. Washington County Education and Economic Development Alliance Overview
14. Keeping Promises: Honoring Our Commitment to Education Equity (February 1995)
15. State Board of Education Review of Current Cooperative Agreements (December 1, 1995)
16. Regionalization Committee Progress Report (January 15, 1997)
17. Essential Programs and Services: Equity and Adequacy in Funding to Improve Learning for All Children (1997)
18. The Evaluation of School Consolidation in Maine (September 1997)
19. Regional Cooperative Relationships Report (June 3, 1998)
20. School Governance: A Vital Factor in Student Achievement (June 30, 2002)
21. School Administrative Unit Study Group Interim Report (January 30, 2003)

## **Appendix D**

## **Initial Meetings with Consultants and Stakeholder Groups**

Walter McIntire (education consultant)

Ronald Barker and Dale Douglas, representing the Maine School Management Association

James Rier, representative of Washington County Education and Economic Development Alliance

Alan Kochis and James Jurdak, representing the Maine Association of School Business Officials

Other meetings are scheduled in the coming months.